(b) Manganese Ore India Limited (MOIL) has opposed its merger with SAIL on the ground that its merger with SAIL could deprive other ferro-alloy producers of ore and could also adversely impact on availability of ferro alloys to other steel producers. MOIL is also of the view that it is engaged primarily in underground mining of which SAIL has no experience.

(c) An Expert Group has been constituted by the Ministry to evaluate the feasibilities of various proposals for merger of PSUs under the Steel Ministry keeping in view the technical and financial angles. The Expert Group has since submitted its Report which is under examination of the Ministry.

Expansion of steel plants

2554. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal for the expansion of some steel plants in the country during the Tenth Five Year Plan and the forthcoming Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the funds earmarked therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) to (c) Since the steel sector has been delicenced and deregulated, individual steel plants in the private sector are free to take investment decisions for expansion etc. In the public sector, Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), a Navratna PSU under the administrative control of Ministry of Steel is competent to take its own investment decisions. It has prepared a Corporate Plan (including IISCO) with a perspective up to 2012, which envisages an expenditure of Rs. 35,000 crores. By this, SAIL plans to achieve a growth in production to about 22.5 million tonnes of Hot Metal with commensurate enhancement in production of Crude and Saleable steel. The financing of investment would primarily come from SAIL's internal resources.

Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), another public sector steel plant has drawn up an expansion proposal to increase the liquid steel capacity

from 3 million tonnes to 6.3 million tonnes with an investment of Rs. 8,692 crores by 2008-09, which would be financed from internal resources of RINL. Recently the Government has accorded its approval for this proposal.

Steel Development Fund

†2555. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the steel producing units had collected the amount of Steel Development Fund from the general consumers during past years;

(b) if so, the total amount collected in this regard; and

(c) the amount out of the above disbursed as loans to the steel producers and the names of these steel producers and the reasons for disbursing loans to these steel producers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) The Government had imposed a development surcharge per tonne of certain categories of steel products w.e.f. 5.6.78 for creation of Steel Development Fund (SDF). The SDF levy was imposed on main steel producers who were required to collect the same from their customers and remit to Joint Plant Committee (JPC). The SDF levy was abolished on 21st April, 1994.

(b) The total amount of SDF levy collected by the main steel producers and remitted to the JPC is Rs. 4,589.48 crore.

(c) The corpus of SDF had grown over the years. Moreover, the loans upon becoming due for repayment are being recycled as fresh loans. As on date the total loans given to the main producers are as follows:—

Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL)	:	Rs. 8444.16 crore
Tata Steel Ltd.		Rs. 2213.03 crore
Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL)	:	Rs. 15.00 crore
Indian Iron & Steel Co. Ltd. (IISCO)	:	Rs. 44.68 crore

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.